

Alternatives Funding Opportunities for NPS Transit

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Funding Opportunity Bulletin

Do you know about the transit funding programs available through FTA and FHWA? There are opportunities for both existing and proposed NPS transit systems to partner with state DOTs, transit agencies, local governments, and MPOs to receive funding from FTA and FHWA programs.

MAP-21 and other changes are expected to reduce funding for NPS transit systems by as much as 28 percent. To keep transit in parks running efficiently, NPS transit system managers can seek funding from several FTA and FHWA programs which have not traditionally been utilized by NPS. If you operate or manage NPS transit systems or are interested in learning more about opportunities to fund transit in your park unit, you will find valuable information in the recently released whitepaper [Alternative Funding Opportunities for National Park Service Transit](#).

Getting Started

Many of the funding programs discussed in the whitepaper primarily fund public transportation providers that operate outside of federal lands. However, these programs may also be used to support NPS transit. In some cases NPS is not eligible to apply directly for funding, but NPS transit programs can work in partnership with MPOs, transit operators, municipalities, and non-profits that are eligible to apply. All of the funding programs described in this notice require participation in federally-mandated metropolitan and statewide [transportation planning and programming processes](#) managed by states, MPOs, and Tribal governments.

For rural areas, many FTA and FHWA funding sources flow through state DOTs, which designate providers of public transportation as “subrecipients.” In urbanized areas, funding is often distributed directly to “designated recipients,” which are typically major transit operators or MPOs. Regardless of where your park unit is located, NPS transit systems should proactively engage with partners to increase support for future funding.

To get started:

- Read the Alternative Funding Opportunities for NPS Transit white paper.
- Contact [Jim Evans](#), NPS Alternative Transportation Program Manager, and [your Regional Transportation Program Manager](#) for support.
- Identify whether your park unit is located within an urbanized or rural area, as defined by the U.S. Census (see Attachment 3 of the white paper).
- Determine applicable FTA and FHWA programs based on urban/rural designation, type of transit service, and program eligibility requirements.
- Identify current recipients of relevant funding programs in the region/state.
- Estimate regional economic impacts of NPS transit to help frame discussions with partners.
- Estimate air quality and other environmental benefits of transit service – particularly for park units located within EPA air quality non-attainment or maintenance areas.

When ready, park units may consider initiating coordination with partners in one or more ways:

- Invite officials from surrounding communities to participate in a strategic planning process focused on maintaining or expanding NPS transit service.
- Actively participate in existing regional and state transportation planning and programming processes (e.g., MPO, transit agency, and state DOT meetings).
- Hold public workshops and gatherings to seek public input on, generate support for, and identify champions of NPS transit systems.
- Develop project proposals and encourage state, local and regional partners to apply for FTA and FHWA funding programs to support them.



*A small shuttle at Scotts Bluff National Monument
(Credit: National Park Service Alternative Transportation Program)*

Sources

[Alternative Funding Opportunities for NPS Transit White Paper](#)

[NPS ATP New Funding Opportunities](#)

[NPS Transportation Program Contacts](#)

[FHWA MAP-21 Guidance](#)

[FTA MAP-21 Guidance](#)

[FTA Circular on Urbanized Area Formula Grants](#)

[2012 Formula Grants for Rural Areas Recipient and Subrecipient Contact Information](#)

Important Dates

States, regions, and transit agencies are the recipients of many FTA and FHWA funding programs. Processes for determining suballocations vary significantly, and program funding cycles vary. Park units are encouraged to research the application processes in your state and region to determine the important dates for these programs in your area.

Summary of FTA Programs (\$ in millions)

Program	FY 14 Authorized	Eligible Expenses and Projects
Formula grants for rural areas, §5311	\$608	Planning, capital, operating, and the acquisition of public transportation services
Bus and bus facilities formula grants, §5339	\$428	Capital projects to replace, rehabilitate and purchase buses, vans, and related equipment, and to construct bus-related facilities
Urbanized area formula grants, §5307	\$4,459	Capital projects and planning in all urbanized areas; operating costs in urbanized areas with fewer than 200,000 in population, or for systems with 100 or fewer buses used in peak service
Fixed guideway capital investment grants, "New/Small Starts," §5309	\$1,907	New fixed guideway systems or extensions to fixed guideway systems; bus rapid transit; projects that improve capacity on an existing fixed guideway system
Formula grants for the enhanced mobility of seniors and individuals with disabilities, §5310	\$258	Public transportation projects planned, designed, and carried out to meet the special needs of seniors and individuals with disabilities

Summary of FHWA Programs (\$ in millions)

Program	FY 14 Authorized	Relevant Eligible Expenses and Projects
Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ)	\$2,230	Projects likely to reduce congestion or contribute to the attainment or maintenance of a national ambient air quality standard; transit capital and operating costs
Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP)	\$250	Planning, research, engineering, preventive maintenance, rehabilitation, restoration, construction, and reconstruction of Federal Lands Access Transportation Facilities located on or adjacent to, or that provide access to, federal land
Federal Lands Transportation Program (FLTP)	\$240*	Operations and maintenance of transit facilities; congestion mitigation
Surface Transportation Program (STP)	\$10,100	Capital costs for transit projects eligible for FTA grant funding, including vehicles and facilities
Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)	\$819	On- and off-road pedestrian and bicycle facilities, infrastructure projects for improving non-driver access to public transportation and enhanced mobility, etc.
Construction of Ferry Boats and Ferry Terminal Facilities	\$67	Construction of ferry boat and terminal facilities and the capital cost of leasing a vessel or facilities

*FLTP is authorized at a total of \$300 million annually, with NPS receiving \$240 million annually by statute.